

A

L E T T E R

T O

J. K I D G E L L.

CONTAINING

A full ANSWER to his NARRATIVE.

The THIRD EDITION.



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THE



ONE SHELLING.

1900

A

L E T T E R

TO

J. K I D G E L L.

S I R,

THE first thing that presents itself in your narrative, worthy of the least notice, is your name in manuscript. For some time I confess I was at a loss to understand the meaning of it; but after a perusal of the pamphlet, it was obvious enough; for never was such an arrant catch-penny ushered into the world: therefore every reader must take it, (as it should *seem* to be meant) that your fordidness suspected the bookseller might cheat you of a *single six-pence*; and, to prevent any fraud of that kind, you thought it

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necessary to *sign* your name. But why not add *reverend* to the signature? The first parson, *supposed* to be in his senses, that ever *printed* REVEREND to his name, might, with the same self-assumed air of importance, have added it also to the manuscript.

This puts me in mind of the story of Vespasian and Titus. Vespasian had laid a tax upon urine; which Titus thinking highly indecent, Vespasian presented him with the first piece of money that was collected, and asked him, if he thought it smelled of urine? as Titus could not answer in the affirmative, Vespasian urged the necessity of obtaining money by *any means*. So you, sir, chusing to obtain money (for nobody can suppose any thing else) have made a handle of this blasphemous book, to do it: nor do I believe you have any scruple to *pocket* the produce of the gain made by obscenity and blasphemy. We need not therefore any longer wonder that your piece is a *catch-penny*; for the very title shews it. I shall have but an indifferent opinion of a clergyman, who can write his name to a performance, he should blush to mention; who can harangue on *such a subject* to the publick, in order to gain a few pence; and then, (for what *other* reason can be given for it?) with his own hand to sign his name lest the bookseller should defraud him of the profits of a single book. I am persuaded the most libertine clergyman would be ashamed of such an act.

None can pay an higher veneration to the clergy than I do; but when they cease to act in their own proper character, I despise them as I do those *begging cheats* in the streets, who solicit alms, and may get a good livelihood by following some useful labour.

This

This defect in name is not the only one which I find in your narrative ; there is another which appears as soon as we have turned over the ridiculous dedication, which though it only consists of NINETEEN words, is yet contrived to make a leaf, in order to eke out the pamphlet. This is, Mr. William Faden, printer, in Fleet-street. It should have been Mr. William MAC Faden, for so he called himself until the suppression of the last *Scottish* rebellion ; when the *Scots* being deservedly abhorred by all true Englishmen, he found it is interest (being a *Scot*) to leave MAC out of his name, and call himself plainly *William Faden* ; thereby hoping, if he could not pass in ALL companies for an Englishman, he should not be at least so *conspicuous* a *Scot*. The very idea of a *Scot* was then odious as it is now ; because few, the Pretender's folks excepted, thought themselves safe if near one ; and the first motive which induced Mr. MAC Faden to change his name, I suppose, still influences him to adhere to that change : otherwise, if the *Scots* had gained their point in being able to domineer over every Englishman, I make no doubt but we should long ago, when his countryman was *publicly* at the head of affairs, have seen him resume his long lost MAC, in hopes that it would recommend him to some of that plunder of the English, which, of late, has been so amply distributed among the *Scots*.

But the views of *gain* are not manifested by the *written* name only : for if a clear idea can be formed of *another* part of this bare-faced catch-penny production, we shall find they are at least equally apparent there also. When you had seen a proof-sheet of the Essay
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on Woman, (which by the bye you must know could not have been obtained *honestly*, let it come from where it would) you proposed to the said Mr. MAC Faden “ to defeat the influence and success of it, in a series of letters, which should be communicated to the public, by the assistance of a daily paper, of which Mr. Faden is the printer.” This daily paper is the PUBLIC LEDGER, which being in a state of obscurity, and now likely to continue so, was to be brought forth into public view, and introduced into *private families*, by letters on the subjects of obscenity and blasphemy; WRITTEN BY A CLERGYMAN, I hope that was to be added to the head of them; and at the bottom the reverend gentleman, I likewise hope, was to *sign* his own name, *to prevent counterfeits*. I make not the least doubt but that Mr. MAC Faden acquiesced in the scheme, because he thought it would serve the paper; which indeed stands greatly in need of something to recommend it. He had therefore his interest in view. And what, reverend sir, was you to *get*? for I cannot think, when I look upon your catch-penny pamphlet, that you would *undertake* to give yourself the trouble to write a SERIES of letters for nothing. Was it to be upon the footing of a common hackney scribe, at *five shillings* a letter?—I should suspect that scheme was laid aside, upon Mr. MAC Faden’s not being able to answer for all the proprietors, the laying such an additional expence upon the paper, without their concurrence; which perhaps had it been (as it might for ought I know) communicated to them, they would not have agreed to, as the small profits arising from the inconsiderable sale of the paper would not bear it. When this paltry scheme was
formed

formed, only *one* sheet of the work had been obtained : thus we see how ready *one*, if not two *honest* men, were to make *money* of it. But before they could put their scheme in execution, “ It remained “ to obtain, if such a thing was possible, the remainder of the work by the *same hand*, which had produced this extraordinary fragment “ of it.” By *what means*, Reverend Sir, did you think it could be obtained?—You could not be a stranger to the manner the sheet which you had seen, must have been obtained ; and Mr. MAC Faden, as a printer, must be *perfectly acquainted*. In short, you must both know, that it could not be HONESTLY got ; and would you, Reverend Sir, who have so often read the commandment, “ Thou “ shalt not steal,” and ought, as it is your indispenfible duty so to do, to enjoin with your utmost power, the exact obedience of it, persuade a sinner who had broke it, to *repeat* the offence? I *hope* not. There is a respect which is due to your character as a clergyman, against which I would not willingly offend : but I confess I am utterly at a loss what construction to put upon the above passage. For your own sake, sir, I hope you will explain it : for in its present ambiguous state, every *honest* man must stagger at it. It seems to EXCEED the warrant by which Mr. Wilkes was seized, and his papers also, in order to fish for evidence against him : for if any meaning can be put upon it, it is, that a servant, who had stolen only a proof sheet, was afterwards, to serve a purpose, to steal, *if possible*, a WHOLE BOOK. I should not be surpris'd if I was next to hear, that he had given information of there being a very handsome silver candlestick in his master's house, which his master constantly used when

writing; and that, *if possible*, he must steal that also. When the king's messengers entered Mr. Wilkes's house, they did it by *force*; and what they took, they had the appearance of some kind of authority for; though it is a kind of authority which this country abhors, and the exercisers of it, yet what they did, they did *openly*. This was honest in *them*, at least. But surely you will not call that servant honest, nor in any manner attempt to vindicate him, who *secretly* robs a GOOD MASTER, that had behaved to him in a *most extraordinary generous manner*, of the minutest trifle, with an intent to injure him. Instead of encouraging or rewarding such a servant, every honest man, I doubt not, will concur with me in thinking, he ought to have been *brought to justice*: for no man is safe in his house, if there are men in the world who will, in any manner, or on any *pretence*, encourage his servants to *rob* him. Almost every individual has some secrets, which he does not intend the public should know; and every gentleman, who keeps servants, unavoidably entrusts them with certain matters, which he does not mean or intend, should through *any channel*, be COMMUNICATED TO ANY BODY ELSE. How destructive would it be of the happiness, and perhaps even *dangerous* to the *safety* of many persons, as well the most *eminent*, as those in middle life, if their servants were to betray their trust; were to divulge all they know, and should steal *papers*, in order to authenticate their *malicious* assertions. Could any thing be more injurious to society in general; or can *honest* men from their hearts *abhor* any thing more? I appeal to every candid man, and desire him to lay his hand upon his breast, and ask his own conscience,

whether

whether he does not think such a crime is not big with the destruction of the peace of every family; and whether he would not, instead of encouraging such a servant to proceed, immediately acquaint his master with it; and however he might detest the offence (if it was not murder) which his master had been guilty of, he would not FIRST have had justice done to the servant for his *treachery*?

When the scheme was laid aside of publishing a series of letters in the Ledger, on the subjects of obscenity and blasphemy, which it was no doubt thought would *help* the sale of the paper, you inform us, that you shewed this proof sheet to the earl of March. What had HE to do with it?—Why, “ He was to concur in any expedient to discountenance so shameful an undertaking.” Was there ever such an absurdity! How could my lord concur in any expedient to discountenance *in the public opinion* (for that must be the meaning of the passage, if any meaning it has) what the *public was never to see*? For the same person that procured you a proof sheet, could likewise inform you, that it was NOT *to be* published; and it was injustice to his lordship, if you did not inform him of that FACT also.

From this time we hear no more of it, until his lordship gives you to understand, “ That proper measures would *infallibly* be taken, “ for the discovery and the punishment of so avowed an enemy to “ society, as the author of so prophane a libel.” From this nonsense we can just gather, that the book, or at least more of it, *seems* now to have been procured: but not a word is mentioned as to the *means*.

means. Strange, that a clergyman, who is so full of piety, and has such a regard for law and justice, as you express, should silently pass over *another* act of wickedness ! I appeal to yourself, whether you did not then KNOW, and whether you do not still *believe*, it was obtained by an act, which the law deems THEFT ? If so, why not, with that love of justice and religion which you would be understood to possess, speak *fully* of ALL delinquents ? Why is *one* to be screened ? Are not the crimes of *both*, in the eyes of God and man, highly offensive ? And do you take upon you to pardon *one* ? If you do, as it should seem by your not even mentioning his offence, where is your *extreme regard* for justice ? Justice deals out with an impartial hand upon all offenders ; but what sort of justice is that which you profess, that while it strives to inflict punishment on one offender, screens another, who has been guilty of nearly as bad a crime, because it answers a *purpose* ?

As to the author, who one should understand is the execrable offender you mean, if the world is rightly informed concerning him, he has been dead some years ago. What *proper measures* could therefore *be* INFALLIBLY taken for his punishment ? Was he to be raised from the *Dead* ?—I am ashamed to be ludicrous on such a subject ; but surely such stark nonsense is enough to make even the gravest prelate crack his sides with laughing.

As to the *publication*, if in that light the offence is to be considered, I think, it appears by your book, the person who stole the sheet, as Mr.

MAC

MAC Faden and yourself, were at first principally concerned in it : for the sheet *seems* to have gone backwards and forwards, from hand to hand ; which by the strict letter of the law is called *publication*. And if it be true, that Mr. MAC Faden and yourself are not the only persons to whom that *base* servant shewed it, *he* must be considered as the *chief* publisher, and Mr. MAC Faden and yourself, not only as publishers also, but as *informers*. I leave to yourself to reflect on the universal odium that it cast on the name of an *informers*. As to Mr. MAC Faden, I do not intend to remonstrate with him, for I neither do, nor desire to know him ; but for you, sir, your character as a clergyman, should have kept you sacred from even the least cause for such an imputation. It lessens, it *greatly* lessens the veneration which we pay to your order ; and I am persuaded that no good divine, even in the moments of his warmest zeal for the christian religion, will thank you for the *services* you have attempted to do it ; nor will he think the clerical order has received any *honour* by your production. All good men, and true friends to religion, detest it ; because it hangs out to mockery and scorn, passages from a work, which was never intended to see the light. Such passages as must, with the profligate, weak, and unwary, *add* to the infamous prejudice, they may have already entertained against religion. Was this the duty of a pastor ? Did he by this means intend to *serve* religion ? I hope he did ; and yet I wish I had better proofs of it than any the narrative contains.

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If we consider it in its POLITICAL sense, there is still abundant room for censure. The two most *feasible* motives for the publication seem to be these ; to get a penny ; and to defame Mr. Wilkes. The cause is but ill served, that was to derive benefit from such a performance. Upon what authority is it made ? Upon a servant BRIBED to ROB his master. O fie ! O scandalous ! what crime, murder excepted, can human nature execrate more ? I did not expect to see a clergyman's name *written* to any thing relative to this *base* transaction. The cause which you have espoused, and intended to *serve* by this publication, becomes injured by it. All honest men now detest it. To what *wicked* means, say they, are its abettors reduced, when, in order to oppress the man, who has PUBLICLY stood forth in defence of the constitutional liberties of his country, they corrupt his servants to *secretly* procure, what they could not obtain by *arbitrary power* and *open force* ? Can the people of England behold such an act, and however they may detest the Essay on Woman, not detest and abhor the *means* by which it was procured ? and you sir, for bringing that into the world, which otherwise, in all probability, would never have seen the light. Many of those who have been *friends* to your party, will now be ashamed of it.

Was it not enough, with regard to the book, to let the *law* take its course, but you must add this unnecessary attempt to injure an unconvicted man in the minds of the people ? How uncandid this ? how unseemly in a divine, to whom *charity* is the greatest ornament ? I hope you did not mean it as an effort to bias a jury, whenever one shall be summoned to decide the matter ; for I would entertain

more

more humanity and benevolence for the *meekness* of your order. Yet, sir, I will be plain enough to tell you, that the publication of that absurd and indecent pamphlet, with your name *written* to it, is very unbecoming you as a clergyman; very indecent, as a friend to religion and society. I wish, I most earnestly wish, for *your own sake*, and the respect to which your profession entitles you, that it had not appeared. But as for the PARTY, which it is meant to serve, I heartily give them joy of it; being firmly persuaded, that in the opinion of the candid public, nothing can do them so irreparable an injury. Nothing could give the public so unanswerable a proof, that when they had failed by *arbitrary means* to CRUSH their antagonist, they had recourse to the most *illegal* and *dishonest means*, to procure papers from his house, which were never intended for publication, and make use of them as evidence against him: Men who can go these lengths, the public are sure not to esteem; and if they can be guilty of *abetting* and *countenancing* a crime of this sort, there is no knowing what else they may do. It is not safe for *any* man to have *any* sort of papers in his house, which he would wish to hide from *any* individual.

If, sir, you had written a grave, serious address to the public, against Blasphemy and obscenity in general, abstracted from any consideration relative to Mr. Wilkes, it would have been becoming you, as a clergyman; and honest men, who would plainly have seen your good intentions, would have thanked you for such a defence of religion and decency. The *timing* of the thing would have been a sufficient

sufficient *application*. There needed no ungenerous insinuations against Mr. Wilkes ; nor any attempt to injure him in the opinion of the public ; for that is ungentleman-like, and uncharitable ; the *appearance* of both of which you should at least have preserved in your narrative. Let the law take its course ; but do not add to law, an attempt to poison the opinions of mankind, and bias the minds of a JURY. If that, sir, was your aim, by the several insinuations in your pamphlet against Mr. Wilkes, you will find yourself mistaken ; for your narrative, instead of raising a popular cry against him, and thereby serving your cause, has done exactly the reverse. It has had a quite contrary effect from what you intended. The public now see what measures his enemies have taken to oppress him ; they ABHOR those measures ; and you, sir, who have seen the book will reap no honour by having brought forth the contents and several extracts from it ; any part of which were never intended should see the light ; and because the *strictest* care was taken that it should not, every infamous means were made use of to do it, and his servant was BRIBED to BETRAY him. You may call this by whatever name you will, love of justice, zeal for religion, or any thing else ; but the *public* do, and ever will detest the WHOLE TRANSACTION. If love of justice prompted you, why not detect the servant ; why not give an account of *his* actions in the narrative ? If zeal for religion, why publish the *contents*, and go so far as to make *extracts* ?—These things were not expected from a clergyman. Such nonsense and ribaldry was *fitter* to be read to your friends of the HELL FIRE CLUB at Oxford, for there it might have given pleasure ; than published

published to the world at large, where it is abominated. Or inserted in a new edition of that obscene book, called THE CARD, for which the bishop of London was going to excommunicate the Reverend author.

But if by defaming Mr. Wilkes you were to serve your cause, I take it for granted *promotion* was to be your reward.—I hope it was not a mitre; for mitres I hope are to be obtained only by *better* actions: they would be cheap indeed, if your paltry pamphlet was the price of one of them, or indeed any *preferment* in the church. I wish to see preferments made for *laudable* merit, not for a catch-penny pamphlet. That is the low traffic of booksellers; let them enjoy it, it is *their* bread: you should have been above it; and if you was determined upon publishing such a foolish pamphlet, you ought to have prudence enough to have at least kept your *name* a secret.

What reader in his senses is not astonished at this paragraph?—
 “ Deliberately, and in a few words I ask, for what valuable confidence upon earth, would a serious or a good man permit an hour’s perusal of this execrable essay to his children? I reason but from what I feel within my own breast; for could I be persuaded to believe that such a misfortune would probably happen to a child of mine, I should be the most afflicted parent in the world.” Did ever mortal read such *stuff*? What parent ever intended it should be read to his children? Was not the *strictest* care taken to keep it as
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much a *secret* as possible? Why therefore did you bring the contents, or any part of it into the world?—I am persuaded no parent will think your narrative *fit* to be read to his children.--But you intended to cast an odium on Mr. Wilkes by your publication, and, to your mortification, it has had just a contrary effect; for good men detest your narrative as they would the book itself.

The next piece of absurdity and nonsense, with which we are presented, is this: “ Was it actually possible, that a libel so injurious to all ranks and conditions of men, to the good government under which we live, and above all the blessed religion which we] profess, should by so uncommon an accident, fall into my hands, and that I could innocently promote, by an unseasonable and passive silence, the impunity and the success of it?”

It is over-straining the matter much, to construe this as a libel against *all ranks and conditions of men*, which was never intended to be seen by the public. And what have the government to do with it? Do you wish to see such an *arbitrary one* established, as shall take cognizance of what every man has in his house? The people of England will not suffer it. They abhor ALL modes of TYRANNY and *undermining craft*. They know they are FREE; and they will *preserve* that freedom which their ancestors purchased with their blood. How do we admire a Russell, a Hambden, and a Sidney, who bravely stemmed the torrent of arbitrary power, and opposed those *pliant* court sycophants, that aimed at *enslaving* their country. It would
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be an *ungrateful* age, that did not set a very high price on its liberties, so *dearly* purchased. Thanks to heaven, there is not at this time, the least spark of ingratitude amongst the freeborn people of England. But how was your silence *to promote the success of it*? You cannot be a stranger to the number said to be printed, which was only *Twelve*, consequently it could not be intended for publication. What nonsense this! Are not you *promoting the success of it*, by publishing the *contents* and *different parts* of it?

If a man, a *clergyman*, under the veil of religion, may publish with impunity, the CONTENTS of a book which is deemed *obscene* and *blasphemous*; and may likewise go so far as to make EXTRACTS from it: if he may, by the strongest insinuation, impute the crime of it to a gentleman, *before* he is convicted of any thing relative to it: if he may by this means forestall the law, and attempt to bias the minds of a jury; if he may hang out to the PUBLIC what was never intended for the PUBLIC EYE; if a man's servant may be BRIBED, to *clandestinely* take away from his master, papers to be made use of as evidence against him; *then* farewell RELIGION, LIBERTY, and LAW.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your humble servant,

A REAL FRIEND to RELIGION and to JUSTICE.

POSTSCRIPT.

P O S T S C R I P T.

What you say relative to the Greek inscription, which you translate THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD, so fully demonstrates your illiterateness and ignorance, that though I at first intended to pass it over in silence, yet, upon recollection, I must mention one word of your total want of scholarship. You ought, Sir, to have known, that the words ΣΩΤΗΡ ΚΟΣΜΟΥ, which you have translated THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD, have no respect to christianity, and therefore the allusion is a blasphemy of your own, and NOT of the author of th *Essay on Woman*. That inscription is found upon an ancient PHALLUS, of a date of much more remote antiquity than the birth of Christ. The account of this antique may be seen at large in De La Chaussée's *Museum Romanum*, printed at Rome in folio in 1692, and, BY HIS OWN PERMISSION, dedicated to the Pope; who, I suppose, is a CHRISTIAN prince.

The late reverend and learned Dr. Middleton, in that valuable work, entitled, *Germana quædam Antiquitatis eruditæ Monumenta*, &c. has not scrupled to give the following short account of it:

“ Quod quidem illustrari quodammodo videtur a symbolica quadam
 “ apud causæum priapi effigiæ, cui Galli Gallinacei caput crista
 “ ornatum, rostri vero loco, fascinum ingens datur: cujusque in
 “ basi litteris Græcis inscriptum legitur ΣΩΤΗΡ ΚΟΣΜΟΥ. SER-
 “ VATOR

" VATOR ORBIS. Quæ omnia vir doctus ita interpretatur : Gallum scilicet, avem soli sacram esse ; solemque generatricis facultatis præsidem ; pudendumque ides virile Gallinaceo capiti adjunctum denotare, quod a conjunctis solis priapique viribus, animalium genus omne procreatum et conservatum sit, secundum physicum quoddam Aristotelis axioma, Homo hominem generat et sol.

F I N I S.

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